







PROCEEDINGS  
OF A  
**Convention of Delegates**  
FROM  
VARIOUS PRESBYTERIES IN THE CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA,  
HELD IN THE  
**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,**  
**ATLANTA, GEORGIA,**  
ON THE  
15th, 16th and 17th of August, 1861.

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**FRANKLIN PRINTING HOUSE.**  
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## PROCEEDINGS, &c.

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ATLANTA, GEORGIA, August 15, 1861.

A Convention of delegates from various Presbyteries in the Confederate States of America met in the First Presbyterian Church at 3 o'clock, P M.

Rev. J. S. WILSON, D. D., was called temporarily to the Chair, and Rev. H. R. RAYMOND was chosen Temporary Secretary, for the purpose of effecting a regular organization.

On motion, a Committee on Credentials was appointed, consisting of Elder W L. Mitchell, Rev. D. McNeill Turner, D. D., and Rev. J. P McMullen.

A half an hour was then spent in devotional exercises.

The Committee on Credentials submitted the following Report, which was agreed to:

The Committee on Credentials report that there are present, as Delegates:

*From the Presbytery of Nashville.*—Rev. J. Bardwell.

*From the Presbytery of East Alabama.*—Rev. G. H. W. Petrie, D. D.

*From the Presbytery of South Alabama.*—Rev. H. R. Raymond.

*From the Presbytery of South Carolina.*—Rev. J. B. Adger, D. D., Rev. D. McN. Turner, D. D., Chancellor Job Johnstone, Hon. Thos. C. Perrin.



*From the Presbytery of Flint River.*—Rev. John S. Wilson, D. D., Elder Wm. H. Cooper.

*From the Presbytery of Tuscaloosa.*—Rev. J. P. McMullen, Elder A. A. Archibald.

*From the Presbytery of Hopewell.*—Rev. G. H. Cartledge, Elder W. L. Mitchell.

*From the Presbytery of Charleston.*—Rev. A. A. Porter, Elder Andrew Crawford.

*From the Presbytery of Bethel.*—Rev. John S. Harris, Elder Robert S. Hope.

*From the Presbytery of Cherokee.*—Rev. John W. Baker.

*From the Presbytery of Harmony* —Rev. T. R. English, Elder S. E. Wilson.

Respectfully submitted,

WM. L. MITCHELL, *Chairman.*

The Convention then proceeded to choose permanent officers. Rev. JOHN S. WILSON, D. D., was chosen President, Rev. H. R. RAYMOND, Secretary, and Rev. JOHN S. HARRIS, Assistant Secretary.

On motion, the General Rules governing our Church Judiciaries were adopted by this Body.

It was *Resolved*, That any Ministers and Elders being present, not Delegates, be invited to sit as Corresponding Members.

The following names were accordingly enrolled as Corresponding Members:

Rev. J. L. Rogers, Flint River Presbytery.

“ James Stacey, “ “ “

“ H. C. Carter, “ “ “

“ J. W. Hoyte, Nashville “

“ J. O. Lindsay, South Carolina “

“ C. P. Beman, D. D., Hopewell “

Elder F. T. Simpson, “ “

“ Joseph Pinson, Flint River “

The Convention then adjourned until 9 o'clock to-morrow morning, and was closed with prayer.

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AUGUST 16, 1861. {  
6 o'clock, A. M. }

The Convention met pursuant to adjournment, and was opened with reading of the Scriptures, singing and prayer. Rev. J. P. McMullen presiding, in the temporary absence of the President.

The Minutes of yesterday were read, corrected and approved.

Elder Archibald Simpson and Elder David Ardis, of the Presbytery of Cherokee; Rev. C. B. King, of Hopewell Presbytery, and Elder J. L. Harper, of North Mississippi Presbytery, being present, their names were enrolled as Corresponding Members. Also, Rev. J. C. Simmons, Rev. D. J. Pierce, and Rev. W. J. Scott, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

A paper having been presented by Dr. Turner, on motion, it was

*Resolved*, That this, together with all other papers that may be presented, be referred to a General Committee, consisting of one member from each Presbytery represented in this body, with instructions to consider and report upon the various subjects legitimately belonging to this Convention.

The Convention then entered into an Interlocutory Meeting for a full and free expression of opinions: pending which, the Convention took recess until 2½, P. M.

After recess, the Convention resumed the business of the Interlocutory Meeting.

The business of the Interlocutory Meeting having been completed, the following General Committee was appointed pursuant to the resolution of this morning, to-wit:

Rev. D. McNeil Turner, D. D.,  
“ J. Leighton Wilson, D. D.,  
“ John S. Harris,  
“ A. A. Porter,  
“ J. W. Baker,  
“ Joseph Bardwell,  
Elder W. L. Mitchell,  
“ Wm. A. Cooper,  
Rev. G. H. W. Petrie, D. D.  
“ J. P. McMullen,  
“ H. R. Raymond.

On motion, Rev. J. B. Adger, D. D., was added to the Committee.

The Convention then adjourned until 10 o'clock to-morrow morning, and was closed with prayer.

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SATURDAY MORNING, }  
August 17, 1861. }

The Convention met pursuant to adjournment, at 10 o'clock, A. M., and was opened with prayer.

The Minutes of yesterday were read and approved.

Rev. E. P. Palmer, of Cherokee Presbytery, and Elder D. C. Campbell, of Hopewell Presbytery, being present, were enrolled as Corresponding Members.

The General Committee submitted a Report, which was accepted, and, pending the discussion on a motion to adopt, the Convention took recess until 2½, o'clock, P. M.

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ATLANTA, 2½ o'clock, P. M.

After recess, the Convention proceeded to business.

The Report of the General Committee was amended, and unanimously adopted, viz:

### 1. ON THE STATE OF THE CHUCH.

Prior to the recommendation of such course of action as seems to be demanded by the condition in which the Presbyterian Church within the Confederate States is placed, this Convention deems it proper to refer to the circumstances in which it originated, and to express its views with regard to the position which it occupies.

At the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, held in Philadelphia, in May last, the following minute was adopted, to-wit:

*“Resolved, That this General Assembly, in the spirit of that Christian patriotism which the Scriptures enjoin, and which has always characterized this Church, do hereby acknowledge and declare our obligation to promote and perpetuate, so far as in us lies, the integrity of these United States, and to strengthen, uphold and encourage the Federal Government in the exercise of all its functions under our noble Constitution, in all its provisions, requirements and principles, we profess our unabated loyalty. And to avoid all misconception, the Assembly declares that the term Federal Government, as here used, is not meant any particular administration, or the peculiar opinions of any particular party, but that central administration, which, being at any time appointed and inaugurated according to the terms prescribed in the Constitution of the United States, is the visible representative of our national existence.”*

By this act of the Assembly, a large proportion of the Churches under its care felt themselves aggrieved; not because they disputed the right of the Assembly to give a deliverance upon any question of duty, growing out of their various relations, civil, social and ecclesiastical; but because, during a state of war between two sections of the Confederacy formerly known as the United States of America, one of which had found it necessary to withdraw from the other, to establish an independent government of its own, and to resort to arms in maintenance of its rights, and in defense against threatened invasion of barbaric character, the Assembly assumed the right of determining the political status of every member of every Church under its care, a right inherent in the State, and not in the Church, and in the assumption of this right, enjoined upon said members the performance of acts which, as to those residing within the Confederate States, were absolutely trea-

sonable, in view of the political relations established for them by those States.

It was so manifest that the severance of the ecclesiastical must follow that of the political relation, that very soon after the dissolution of the Assembly, a proposition emanated from Richmond, Virginia, for the holding of a Convention in that city, at as early a period as the 24th day of July last, to take into consideration the condition of the Presbyterian Church within the Confederate States, and to devise such measures as the exigencies of the times might demand. The Presbytery of Memphis, at a meeting on the 13th June, renounced the jurisdiction of the Assembly, and recommended that a Convention, to be composed of delegates from the Presbyteries, should meet at Atlanta, Georgia, on the 15th day of August. The venerable Presbytery of Orange, on, or even before the same day, made a similar recommendation, but proposing December 4th as the time, and Augusta, Georgia, as the place. Similar recommendations proceeded from several other Presbyteries, before the middle of July, as well as from various prominent individuals in several States, and from different Churches. Action at an early day, preliminary to the organization of another General Assembly, seemed to be called for, and as the time and place suggested by the Presbytery of Memphis seemed to be the preference of the majority of those urging the call of a Convention, this Convention has met for the purpose of carrying out the wishes of those to whose action it owes its being.

As only eleven of the forty-five Presbyteries within the Confederate States are here represented, this Convention does not regard itself as the exponent of the views of all those Presbyteries; nor, with regard to those that it represents, does it undertake to speak authoritatively. It does not arrogate to itself the character or power of a Church Court. The respective delegates assembled have met for the express purpose of conferring with each other upon the State of the Church within our bounds, and of devising such course of action as seems to be required under existing circumstances, and which they can conscientiously recommend for adoption by the Presbyteries which they represent, and by all the Presbyteries within the Confederate States; nay, they cannot forbear the expressing of a wish, that the action of this Convention may commend itself to the Presbyteries in the Border States.

This Convention regarding its action as merely advisory, and cherishing a proper regard for the Presbyteries not here represented, respectfully offers itself as the medium of communication between the various Presbyteries within the Confederate States, and suggests for their consideration the following measures, under the

firm conviction that the adoption of them will meet the difficulties of our present anomalous condition as a Church, and expedite the organization of a General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America.

In speaking of the anomalous condition of the Church in the Confederate States, it is not meant, that by any act which may have been performed by any Presbytery, or by any Church, those bodies have ceased to be Presbyterian, as if deprived by said act of their Confession of Faith, Form of Government, &c. But it is manifest, that by the abnegation of the jurisdiction of the General Assembly, or by a declaration of withdrawal from it, the unity of the Church has been broken. As the session gives expression to the unity of members in a single Church, and the Presbytery to the unity of Churches within certain limits, so the General Assembly gives expression to the unity of Presbyteries within larger bounds.

The bond of union is a written Constitution. Without this bond, unity cannot be expressed through any General Assembly. It is the opinion of this Convention, that a General Assembly cannot be convened until the Presbyteries proposing to be represented in it shall have signified their adoption of a bond of union. The Constitution under which we have hitherto acted together, is entitled, the Confession of Faith, Form of Government, &c., of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Necessity is laid upon us to "come out and be separate" from the Church. To affect unity among the disintegrated parts of the former body, a Constitution for the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America is imperiously demanded. The principles set forth in the former Constitution are our principles. By holding to them, as Churches and Presbyteries, we continue to be Presbyterians. But this Convention respectfully submits, that a specific act, on the part of the now or hereafter separated Presbyteries, declaring the former Constitution, with such modifications as will hereafter be suggested, to be their Constitution, is necessary in order to give expression to their union in a General Assembly.

This Convention entertains some apprehensions that serious difficulties may arise from the withdrawal of the Presbyteries from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, unless the intention of the Presbyteries in such act be explicitly set forth. The right of succession in law, and corresponding interests, may be endangered. This apprehension has influenced this Convention in one of the recommendations hereinafter made.

In view of a probable meeting of a General Assembly in the Con-

federate States of America, before the close of the year, this Convention makes no suggestion as to the mode in which the work of Education, Publication, Domestic Missions, &c., shall be carried on. But as a temporary expedient for conducting to a limited extent the work of Foreign Missions has been already adopted, which expedient has received the sanction of many Churches in the Confederate States, and as this Convention represents eleven Presbyteries in said States, a recommendation is respectfully submitted with reference to this matter, and the Churches represented in this body are pledged to the support of it. The other departments of Christian enterprise, as that of Education, Domestic Missions, &c., may be safely left to the Presbyteries, Synods, and the South-western Advisory Committee at New Orleans.

While this Convention is far from ignoring the pain of separation from many with whom it has been our delight, as Presbyterians, to act in former years, it cannot conceal the gratification which it experiences in the contemplation of the increased facilities for doing a great work for the Church and for God, afforded by the severance of our previous political and ecclesiastical relations.

The duty of evangelizing the slave population rests upon the Church of Christ in the Southern States. Our connection with the non-slaveholding States, it cannot be denied, was a great hindrance to the systematic performance of this work. It is true, that the Northern portion of the Presbyterian Church professed to be conservative. But the opposition to our social economy was constantly increasing. Conservatism was only a flimsy covering for the evil intent which lay in the heart of the Northern Churches. In the last General Assembly, Dr. Yeomans, a former Moderator of the Assembly, regarded as the very embodiment of conservatism, did not hesitate to assign as a reason for the rejection of Dr. Spring's resolution, that the adoption of it, by driving off the Southern brethren, would forever bar the Northern Church against all efforts to affect the system of involuntary servitude at the South.

This Convention gratefully accepts the trust which the Great Head of the Church has committed to the Church in the South, and earnestly invites the attention of Southern Presbyterians to the increased responsibilities devolving upon them, and to the exalted privileges which have fallen to their lot. With these preliminary considerations, the following recommendations are respectfully submitted:

First. That all the Presbyteries which have passed an act dissolving their connection with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, at the ensuing

Fall Sessions, declare their adherence and submission to the Confession of Faith, Form of Government, Book of Discipline and Directory of Worship, with the single change of the phrase, from that of "Presbyterian Church in the United States of America," to that of "Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America;" and that such Presbyteries as have not renounced the jurisdiction of the General Assembly of the United States of America by a formal act, should, at the ensuing fall sessions, take such action as may be necessary, to effect a union in a General Assembly with their sister Presbyteries in the South.

Second. That these Presbyteries send Commissioners, according to the former rule of representation, to a General Assembly, to be held in the city of Augusta, in the First Presbyterian Church, on the 4th day of December next, and that the Rev. B. M. Palmer, D. D., as Principal, and the Rev. Dr. Wilson, pastor of said Church, as Alternate, be requested to preach the opening sermon, and to preside until the Assembly be organized, and a Moderator and Clerk be chosen.

Third. That the Rev. Drs. Waddel and Gray, of the Presbytery of Memphis, and Dr. Joseph H. Jones, of Augusta, Georgia, Ruling Elder, be a Committee of Commissions to examine the credentials of all who may present themselves at that meeting, and that these brethren be requested to be present in the First Presbyterian Church, in the city of Augusta, on the evening previous to the meeting of the General Assembly.

Fourth. That the Presbyteries which have passed an act renouncing the jurisdiction of the General Assembly of the United States of America, do declare, that in that act they did not design to withdraw from their sister Presbyteries in the South, nor to dissolve their Synods.

Fifth. That all the Presbyteries in the Confederate States send up their records to their respective Synods for review, and that the Synods confirm the action herein proposed.

## II. ON FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The Convention has listened with deep interest to the statements of Rev. J. Leighton Wilson, D. D., in relation to the present condition of Missions among the Western tribes of Indians, and rejoices to learn that our red brethren sympathize so fully with the South, and with our Southern Zion, and they have our good wishes and prayers for their growth in the grace of the Gospel, and in the arts of civilized life.



This Convention fully endorses the action of the brethren at Columbia, in calling the attention of our Churches throughout the Confederacy to the pressing demands of these Indian missions, in receiving and disbursing the funds sent forward, which already exceed four thousand dollars, and as far as this Convention has authority, and to the extent of the Presbyteries here represented, appoint the same brethren at Columbia to continue the work till the meeting of the General Assembly, to be held in the city of Augusta, Georgia, on the 4th day of December next, when the whole subject of Missions, Foreign and Domestic, as well as all other objects of Christian enterprise in which our Presbyterian people have been engaged, will be provided for.

This Convention is also impressed with the very great importance of sending a direct commission, of two Ministers at least, to visit the Missionaries and native Preachers among these Indians, to prevent their entire dispersion and the loss of what has already been accomplished among them, and recommends the Committee at Columbia to make immediate provision for sending Commissioners, not doubting that the Churches of all the Presbyteries in the Confederate States will cheerfully contribute funds to meet the necessary demands of the said Indian Missions.

This Convention also feels that the few Missionaries in more distant fields, as China, Siam and Japan, who went from our Southern Churches and Presbyteries, should be supported by our people.

The Convention understands that it will require about \$15,000 per annum to support these Indian Missions, and about \$4,000 per annum to pay the Southern Missionaries in the more distant fields. In addition to these sums, provision should be made to meet the expenses of the Commissioners to the Western Indians, also to pay the salary of Rev. J. Leighton Wilson, from the time he entered upon his duties at Columbia, in June last. To carry out these statements and suggestions, the Convention adopts the following resolutions:

1. *Resolved*, That this Convention endorses the action of the brethren at Columbia, in reference to our Indian Missions, and requests them to continue their labors till the General Assembly can meet to take charge of the subject.

2. *Resolved*, That all our Churches in the Confederate States be requested to contribute to the support of the said Indian Missions, and of our Missionaries in more distant fields.

3. *Resolved*, That out of the funds contributed, should be paid

the expenses of the Commissioners to South-western tribes, and the salary of Dr. Wilson.

4. *Resolved*, That the Committee at Columbia send a commission, consisting of Rev. J Leighton Wilson and Rev. Charlton Wilson, formerly Missionary to the Choctaws, to visit our Western Indian Missions, without delay, with instructions to report fully the state of those Missions to the General Assembly at its first meeting.

### III. ON THE WAR.

In the peculiar circumstances of the country, under which this Convention has met, it cannot be considered altogether foreign to the purpose for which it is assembled, that it should give expression to its sentiments with reference to the war which is now waging between the United States and the Confederate States of America.

This Convention does not assume to itself, nor does it claim for the Church of Christ, the right to determine the political relations of individuals, or to solve for them political questions. But this Convention has a Country that it calls its own: that Country is known as the Confederate States of America, and to it this Convention holds to be due our strongest affections and our greatest energies. That Country is in affliction. A cruel enemy is waging against it relentless, exterminating war. Language fails to depict its barbaric character. The heart recoils at the bare suggestion of its horrors. It were almost treason to sit, as unmoved spectators of such appalling scenes. The heart prompts to utterance. The heart of the faithful citizen, moved to sympathy in the sorrows of its suffering Country, must be allowed to speak. This Convention asks the privilege of expression, and desires to say to its beloved, bleeding Country, "Let my right hand forget her cunning—yea, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

If the voice of this Convention can be heard, it would say to all within the compass of it: "Up, quit you like men, be strong." Pour your treasures into the lap of your Country; throw your stout arms around her; let her feel the tendrils of enduring affection winding around her heart, and if need be, let your blood flow like water, if the ark of the covenant cannot be buoyed up, save upon a gory flood. Put your trust in God, and pray your Country through this dreadful war.

It was *Resolved*, That the proceedings of this Convention, signed by the President and Secretary, be published in the four Presbyterian newspapers in the Confederate States.

It was also *Resolved*, That 1,000 copies of our entire Minutes be published in pamphlet edition, under the superintendence of Rev. Dr. WILSON.

Five dollars from each Presbytery here represented was then paid to the Rev. Dr. WILSON, amounting to \$55, for expenses of publication, postage, &c.

It was further *Resolved*, That a copy of the pamphlet edition be sent to each Minister, to the Stated Clerk of each Presbytery in the Confederate States, and to every Member of this Body, including the Corresponding Members.

*Resolved*, That the thanks of this Convention be hereby tendered to the citizens of Atlanta who have, with such liberal hospitality, entertained its Members; and that the Pastors of the First and Central Churches be requested to make such publication of this resolution as they may deem advisable.

The Minutes of this day's Proceedings were then read and confirmed.

The Convention then adjourned *sine die*.

Closed with prayer.

JOHN S. WILSON, *President*.

H. R. RAYMOND, *Secretary*.

JOHN S. HARRIS, *Ass't Secretary*.









